see what measures we can take under the existing law to check it. In the meanwhile you can rest assured that the Government of Travancore are very anxious for the good name of Travancore generally, in the interests of the trade of the State as a whole and also in the interests of particular planting concerns, that every possible attempt should be made to stamp out this evil. The question of legislation will be proceeded with as soon as possible. If you, or your associate planters, can render any help in this matter by bringing to notice legislation elsewhere enacted to counteract the same, I shall be greatly obliged if you will place what information you have at the disposal of the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil whom I shall ask to consult you.

17. Introduction of legislation establishing taluk boards and district boards in the State.

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI GOVINDA PILLAI (*Member, Neyyattinkara taluk, Group II*) said that progress in the sphere of politics depended chiefly upon the growth of representative institutions. The government of the people for the people by the people was the ideal form of Government. This ideal could be reached only slowly and by stages. The people should first be associated with the Government, they should then be given more and more functions and eventually the whole Government should be entrusted to them.

Viewed in the light of this ideal, the Government of Travancore deserved unqualified praise. They had organised and developed such representative institutions as the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Legislative Council, the several Municipal Councils, and the Village Panchayat Courts. There was little doubt therefore that at this critical juncture in the history of British India and of the Indian States, the Government should give some more powers to the people. In British India the agitation for political reforms was at its zenith. Echoes of this agitation were to be heard in the States also. The fact that the Government of Travancore did nothing to stifle the legitimate aspirations of the people itself did credit to their broadmindedness. At this important juncture therefore it could reasonably be expected that the Government would do something to foster the growth of self-governing institutions in the State.

Government should establish taluk boards in all the taluks. There should be at least 12 members, including the president, in each board. The Tahsildar of the taluk might be nominated by Government as the president of the board, and the local medical officer, P. W. D. Section Officer, and Inspector of Schools as official members. The local S. M. P. A. member and the member of the Legislative Council should also be members in the board. The remaining members should be elected by the taluk. Every board should meet once a month. They should be able to ascertain the needs of each taluk in regard to sanitation, education, irrigation, communication, registry of lands etc., and

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remedy them with no loss of time. Such emergent needs could not be dealt with off-hand by means of the 15 minutes' representations in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly which met only once in 12 months or by resolutions in the Legislative Council which met only three or four times in a year and in which the officers on the spot who had to execute the work had no place. Over the taluk boards there should be district boards which should have in their composition members elected from the taluk boards and official members nominated from among the district officers of the several departments. The Dewan Peishkar should be the President of the district board. In both the taluk boards and the district boards there should be a non-official majority. The taluk boards should, as had been stated already, meet not less than once every month and the district boards not less than once in three months. The decision of the majority should in each be final. In case of difference of opinion between the president and the members, the question should be referred to Government who, after considering all aspects, should give their decision. That decision should be binding upon all concerned. It was not necessary that for the present the local boards should be asked to raise special funds for their working. If special funds were found to be absolutely necessary, some of the existing tolls, market dues etc., could be transferred to them.

Similar local bodies had been established in British India even fifty years ago and they had proved to be of considerable help to the Government in the administration of the country. Travancore should have followed that example long ago. At any rate no more time was to be lost in introducing this reform in this State. It was earnestly hoped that the Government of Travancore would devote careful attention to the matter and allow the people another opportunity for participating in the actual administration of the country and by that means further strengthen the foundations of responsible Government.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Narayana Pillai Govinda Pillai, I guessed that you are making your representations—and you have been kind enough to verify my inference--with no first hand knowledge of local boards, taluk boards or district boards in British India and that you have no knowledge beyond what you read about them. It is my firm conviction that district boards, and local boards such as exist in British India however well adapted to conditions prevailing in British India are not suitable for Travancore. As all of you know, conditions in Travancore are in many respects very different from those of British India and I for one am very strongly of opinion that the bodily adoption of the system of taluk boards and district boards in British India will be entirely unsuitable to Travancore. Do not run away with the idea that the Travancore Government do not wish to associate the people of the country in concerns affecting local areas. Far from it, you know we have our municipalities and I may tell you that very shortly, in a few days' time, will be published for public criticism and suggestion a set of rules to provide for the association of the people in

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the matter of advising Government in regard to internal communications. These bodies are going to be set up according to the rules published in the Gazette. We should have a set number of divisional boards and a central board. The proposals are that in the Divisional Boards, S. M. P. A. Members of the taluks concerned should be associated with the Peishkars, Tahsildars and Public Works Department officers in drawing up their programme and making their recommendations in the matter of internal communications; and similarly it is proposed to have a Central Board in Trivandrum on which will be non-official members of the Legislative Council and a limited number of officials. If and when these bodies are established it will be the first step in associating the non-official public with the Government agencies, I do not know, but possibly for other things too representative agencies may in course of time evolve themselves, but when such bodies do evolve themselves I consider they will not be of the type of District Boards and Taluk Boards in British India. Therefore I would suggest to you to go into these circumstances very carefully before you make any further suggestions on the subject to Government.

18. Promulgation of a Tea Thefts Prevention Regulation on the lines of the Rubber Thefts Prevention Regulation, IX of 1087.

MR. A. R. ST. GEORGE (*Member, Central Travancore Planters' Association*) requested that Government should introduce legislation for the prevention of tea thefts on the same lines as the Rubber Thefts Prevention Regulation, IX of 1087, under which all dealers in rubber had to take out licences. The onus of proof in the case of a theft of tea lay at present on the Superintendent of the estate from which the tea was stolen, but if a regulation was brought into force, the onus would lie on the dealer. The necessity for this legislation, the member urged, was apparent for the following reasons :—

(1) Thefts of tea from factories were increasing yearly and had reached serious proportions;

(2) It was very difficult to prosecute suspected persons successfully owing to the difficulty of identifying tea. Stolen tea was generally loose tea, thefts of packed tea with the estates' name on it were very rare, but were known.

The suggestion of the member was that all dealers in tea should be required to take out licences just as dealers in rubber were and that they should also be required to keep books showing whence the tea they sold was procured. The Magistracy and the Police could be empowered to inspect these books occasionally and check the figures. Thefts would then be obiously rendered more difficult as the dealer would find it difficult to account for any large unvouched for quantity of tea found on a surprise visit by the police.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. St. George, I see that the same suggestion as you now put forward on behalf of the Central Travancore Planters' Association was also made on a previous occasion by the representative of the Central Travancore Planters' Association. That was in 1922. What you now propose is legislation effected on the

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